

# 33 years later, still haunted by images

■ **Assassination:** *The feelings inspired by pictures from John F. Kennedy's slaying, which happened 33 years ago last Friday, won't go away.*

By DAVID MICHAEL EITLIN

**E**VEN AFTER 33 years, the grainy images replayed on an occasional television special are riveting. The open-top Lincoln, the roses, a kiss on the flag-draped casket, the heart-wrenching salute from a son just turned 3.

Every year, the images come back around Nov. 22 to mark the passage of another year since the innocence of my baby boomer generation was assassinated along with John Kennedy in Dallas.

We were teens entering adulthood, with the bullets in Dealey Plaza marking our passage.

I've avoided rewatching the Zapruder film, so vivid in the instant

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splatter of red that Hollywood imitates it — and so powerful that it brought a touch of immortality to Abraham Zapruder, the amateur photographer who aimed his camera at so fateful a moment.

But other images are more haunting — one in particular, remembered in black and white on my television screen in 1963 and which reappears for the inevitable assassination anniversary programming, like David Wolper's old documentary, "Four Days in November."

In it, Kennedy lives again, on the stump in Texas for his planned 1964 re-election campaign, but every word carries a dark brush stroke of irony. On this morning, we know, the young president is flashing his last smiles, reaching out for his last handshakes, cracking his last jokes.

In Fort Worth, he is given a Texas-style hat but won't put it on his head. The crowd chants for him to put it on, but Kennedy only teases. I'll put it on Monday at the White House, he says, and you can come down and see it there.

And he is given a beautiful pair of boots on that Friday morning. Come Monday, there will be another pair — a black pair — placed backward in the saddle stirrups of a

horse high-stepping behind the caisson on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

Kennedy and his entourage travel by motorcade to the Fort Worth airport, riding in a convertible and waving to enthusiastic crowds lining the route. And in Dallas, the greeting is just as delightful as the Kennedys ride with Texas Gov. John Connally and his wife, Nellie, in a dark, open-top Lincoln.

Inexorably, the motorcade closes in on downtown Dallas. Kennedy has an appointment there that cannot be changed no matter how badly I want the car to turn in some other direction.

Footage captured by other amateurs shows the Kennedys — Jack and Jackie — flashing smiles as the Lincoln hurtles past crowded sidewalks, racing to Dealey Plaza. And again, the shots ring out.

I was at Baltimore Junior Col-

lege back then (the school's name has been changed a few times since), a 17-year-old freshman on the way to an American history class.

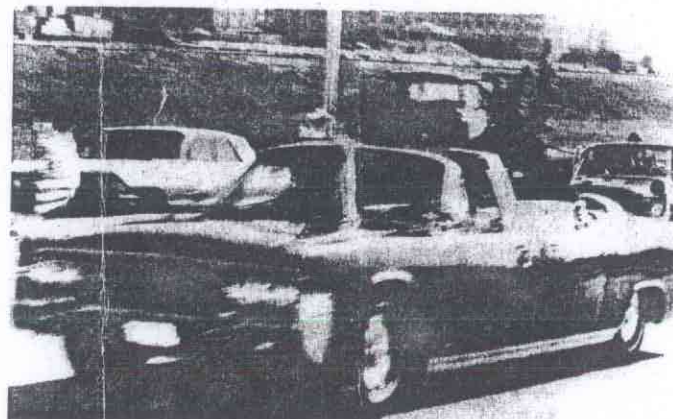
Another student — one I viewed as a bit of a political extremist — came running through a passage-

way between the old Park School buildings that had not yet given way to modern brick structures on the Liberty Heights Avenue campus.

"They didn't have to shoot him," he cried, rushing past me.

"Shoot who?"

"The president," he shouted



Death ride: A Lincoln convertible in 1963 rushed mortally wounded President John F. Kennedy to Parkland Hospital in Dallas.

back. "They shot Kennedy."

In Dallas, events were still unfolding — but in Baltimore, that student was the first I know of to give voice to a conspiracy theory, with a simple pronoun: "They shot Kennedy."

My professor, Wilson Valentine, a former Navy commander, dismissed his class.

"I can't teach American history on a day like this," he said, sending us home to watch history happening in those grainy black-and-white images for the next three days.

Tears were in his eyes. So we watched Jack Ruby murder Lee Harvey Oswald in our living rooms, and then watched the nation bury its president.

Thousands lined the streets from the Capitol to Arlington National Cemetery to feel the chill of that gray Monday against their faces, the image of the caisson reflecting in their eyes.

I watched it on television, and saw every minute of the procession, heard every drumbeat, and was chilled by the wailing cry of the bagpipes, the crackling voice of the priest.

Every one of those grainy black-and-white images I remember anew but wait for that one precious sight that haunts me still, 33 years down the road from Dealey Plaza:

Simple rays of sunlight suddenly reaching down, between tree branches near the grave, slicing through the gloom of that day and my spirit.

## Bridge

By STEVE BECKER  
KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

East dealer.  
Neither side vulnerable.  
NORTH  
♠ A 8 3  
♥ K Q J

has only one card higher than the six West led — the seven, 10, queen or king. Presumably it is not the seven, since with the king

## Sun Crossword

"At The Meat Counter"

